

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEXMASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7475

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1052

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, AS

SUBJECT: ASEAN SUMMIT

1. SUMMARY: ASEAN NATIONS HAVE REFUSED TO INVITE PRIME MINISTER FRASER TO ASEAN POST-SUMMIT MEETING IN BALI. END SUMMARY.

2. THAI FONMIN CHATICHAI, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ASEAN, HAS INFORMED THE GOA THAT THILE ASEAN NATIONS APPRECIATED PM FRASER'S INTEREST IN MEETING WITH THEIR HEADS OF STATES AFTER BALI SUMMIT, THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. REASON GIVEN WAS THAT SEVERAL ASEAN HEADS OF STATE WERE OBLIGED TO DEPART BALI IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SUMMIT MEETINGS. MESSAGE SAID THAT ASEAN NATIONS HOPED TO MAINTAIN CLOSEST RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA, ESPECIALLY ON ECONOMIC ISSUES. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION OF A POSSIBLE MEETING LATER IN YEAR AS RUMORED IN PRESS.

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3. IN REPLY, FONMIN PEACOCK SAID THAT QTE MR. FRASER FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE PRACTICAL AND OTHER PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD BE POSED FOR THE ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN EXTENDING THEIR STAY IN BALI FOR A POST-SUMMIT MEETING. END QTE P
PEACOCK WENT ON TO SAY THAT QTE THE
GOA WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST ...
WITH ASEAN, AND HOPED THAT THERE WOULD BE AN EARLY
OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER THESE MATTERS FURTHER. END QTE

4. ACCORDING TO WELL PLACED SOURCE IN DFA,
FRASER FIRST GOT THE IDEA OF ATTENDING A POST-SUMMIT ASEAN MEETING FROM SINGAPORE PM LEE. PEACOCK THEN DISCUSSED MATTER WITH GOI FONMIN MALIK (JAKARTA 1000). ACCORDING TO DFA SOURCE, MALIK GENTLY TRIED TO DISSUADE PEACOCK FROM BELIEVING THAT GOA WOULD BE INVITED TO APOST-SUMMIT MEETING. PEACOCK MISUNDERSTOOD, BELIEVED THAT THE GOI FAVORED AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION, AND REPORTED THIS TO FRASER OVER OBJECTIONS OF DFA STAFF.

5. IN ANY EVENT, TURN-DOWN WAS NOT UNEXPECTED AT DFA. IN AUSTRALIAN VIEW, MALAYSIA WAS STRONGEST OPPONENT TO AUSTRALIAN AND JAPANESE PARTICIPATION, LARGELY BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT MEETING WITH OTHER LEADERS IMMEDIATELY AFTER ASEAN SUMMIT WOULD GIVE IMPRESSION THAT NON-COMMUNIST STATES IN REGION WERE GANGING UP AGAINST COMMUNIST STATES. GOI ALSO STRONGLY OPPOSED AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION DURING PATTAYA DISCUSSIONS, LARGELY, IN AUSTRALIAN VIEW, OUT OF PIQUE OVER GOA POSITION ON EAST TIMOR. ACCORDING TO DFA, GOI WAS ALSO DISPLEASED BECAUSE THEY HAD IMPRESSION THAT PM LEE, EXCEEDING HIS AUTHORITY, HAD PRE-COOKED DEAL ON AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS WITH FRASER. PEACOCK'S IMPRESSION THAT GOI APPROVED AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION WAS FINALLY OVERCOME BY MALIK STATEMENT REPORTED IN AUSTRALIAN PRESS THAT QTE PRIME MINISTER MALCOLM FRASER WOULD LIKE TO SHOW THAT HE IS CLOSER TO ASEAN THAN WHITLAM WAS AND HE WANTS TO BE ECONOMICAL - MEET EVERYONE IN ONE VISIT. END QTE ACCORDING TO PRESS, MALIK WENT
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ON TO SAY THAT FRASER ALSO WANTED TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION, PERHAPS TO THE U.S. OR ITS ALLIES, THAT HE HAD QTE
INFLUENCED END QTE ASEAN.

6. GOA STILL HAS IMPRESSION THAT SINGAPORE AND THAILAND FAVORED FRASER PRESENCE IN BALI, AND THAT PHILIPPINES WERE NOT OPPOSED. HOWEVER, THESE THREE NATIONS WERE UNWILLING TO DISTURB THE RATHER SHAKY ASEAN STRUCTURE

THROUGH OVER INSISTANCE ON TALKS WITH NON-MEMBER LEADERS
IN BALI AFTER SUMMIT.

7. FOLLOWING TURN-DOWN, OPPOSITION LEADER WHITLAM ACCUSED
GOA OF DAMAGING AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS WITH ASEAN. WHITLAM

ANDFRASER HAD EMBARRASSED AUSTRALIA BECAUSE OF HIS QTE
HAM-FISTED END QTE ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE AN INVITATION TO
ASEAN POST-SUMMIT MEETING. IN REPLY, PEACOCK SAID THAT
THAI PM KUKRIT HAD ASKED FRASER WHETHER HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE
PART IN TALKS WITH ASEAN LEADERS AFTER THE
SUMMIT. THAI APPROACH, ACCORDING TO PEACOCK, CAME DURING
TALKS WITH FRASER IN KUALA LUMPUR IN JANUARY.

9. COMMENT: THE GOA IS NOW RETHINKING IT ATTITUDE ON
ASEAN. THERE IS MUCH SENTIMENT IN DFA TOWARD DEVELOPING
A RATHER MORE DISTANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ORGANIZATION.
CLOSER COOPERATION WOULD INVOLVE MAINLY ECONOMIC ISSUES,
ESPECIALLY TRADE PREFERENES AND AID, WHICH COULD CAUSE
PROBLEMS FOR THE GOA. END COMMENT.
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